

State of North Carolina
Department of Cultural Resources
Office of Archives and History

ARCHIVES INFORMATION CIRCULAR

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Raleigh, North Carolina

RECORDS RELATING TO TENNESSEE IN THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE ARCHIVES

In view of the fact that the majority of the land now known as the State of Tennessee was originally part of North Carolina, the North Carolina State Archives frequently receives inquiries concerning the early records of those counties originally organized under North Carolina's government but which, after 1790, became part of the State of Tennessee. However, the records of the various counties were retained in the already established county seats of the new state and are therefore not among the holdings of the North Carolina State Archives. Even so, a few early records relating to those original Tennessee counties remain in the custody of the North Carolina State Archives. This information circular is designed to facilitate research in those few records by directing the researcher to the documents in question. Additionally, a reference is also provided for the Archive's holdings of microfilmed Tennessee records; these are transcriptions, made by the Works Progress Administration, of original records in the various Tennessee counties.

Brief Historical Background, 1776-1796

On August 22, 1776, the inhabitants living along the Watauga, Holston, and Nolichucky Rivers petitioned the North Carolina Council of Safety for recognition as a part of the governmental structure of North Carolina. The Council of Safety granted the request and, in November 1776, representatives of these westerners arrived in Halifax to claim their seats in the Provincial Congress, then in session drawing up a state constitution. The delegates represented the newly formed "District of Washington." However, the following year, 1777, the "District of Washington" was divided: the part of the "District of Washington" lying in what is now Tennessee became Washington County;¹ the newly formed Wilkes County, North Carolina, annexed the remaining part of the "District of Washington."

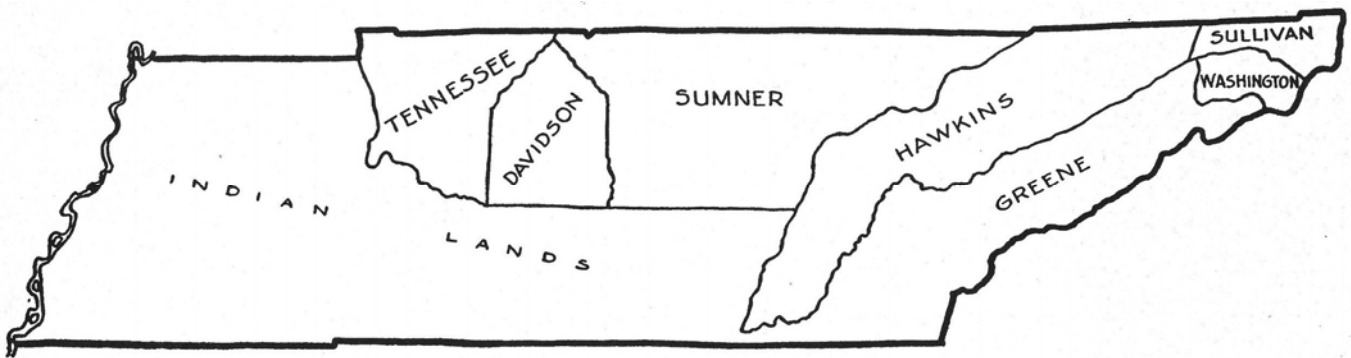
Washington County comprised roughly the territory west of Wilkes County, North Carolina: bounded to the north by the Virginia line, to the south by the Cherokee Indians' hunting grounds, and to the west by the Mississippi River. In 1779, the citizens of Washington County established Jonesboro as the county seat. In the same year, Washington County was divided and a new county, Sullivan, formed. Two more counties, Davidson and Greene,² were formed from Washington in 1783. Sullivan County, which was subdivided in 1787 to form Hawkins County, was made larger by the annexation of a part of Washington County in 1788. In 1787, Davidson County was subdivided to form Sumner County. The following year, still another county, Tennessee, was formed from Davidson County.

¹ This Washington County should not be confused with present-day Washington County, North Carolina (formed from Tyrrell County in 1799).

² Not to be confused with similarly-named counties formed in North Carolina in 1822 and 1799, respectively.

In 1784, the General Assembly of North Carolina, over the objections of many of its members and other prominent citizens of the state, passed an act known as the Act of Cession. This act ceded North Carolina's western country to the Continental Congress. However, a principal provision of this act required Congress to pass an act accepting this ceded territory within a year. The Continental Congress did not receive the act from the General Assembly until the last day of its session and therefore never acted upon it. Nonetheless, some of the inhabitants of the western country proceeded to organize themselves as a separate "state," and set about to write a constitution and establish courts and governmental offices. The attempt to establish a new state, undermined by internal rifts,³ collapsed upon the expiration of the time limit set by the Act of Cession. The territory once more came under the control of North Carolina.

The lack of communication and transportation between the western counties and the more populated areas of North Carolina continued to be a major problem in the governing of the western country. In 1790, the General Assembly once again ceded this region - comprising Washington, Sullivan, Davidson, Greene, Sumner, Hawkins, and Tennessee Counties - to the national government. However, this act of cession retained a part of Washington County for North Carolina. In 1792, the retained area was annexed to Wilkes County. From 1790 to 1796, the ceded area was administered by the United States government. The national government recognized the ceded territory as the State of Tennessee in 1796.



Map of Tennessee in 1790 Showing Approximate County Boundaries Within Present-day State Boundaries

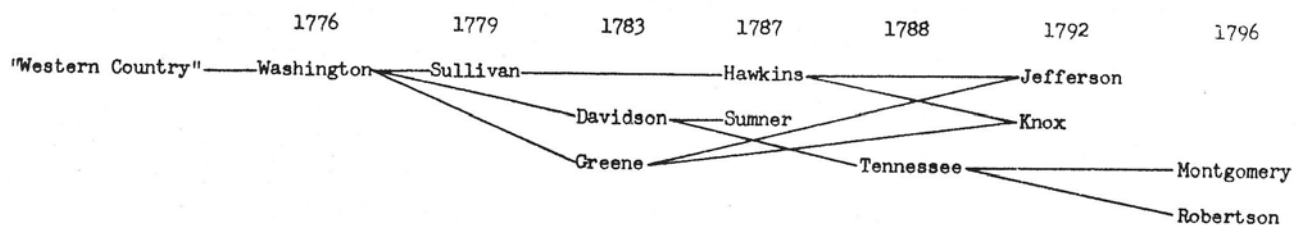


Chart Showing Origin of Tennessee Counties through 1796

³ The inhabitants west of the Cumberland Mountains, then Davidson County, were not involved in the separatist movement. Of the westerners who were, however, two separate political factions wrote constitutions for a State of Franklin and a State of Frankland. An account of the affair will be found in Samuel Cole Williams, *History of the Lost State of Franklin* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Watauga Press, 1924); see also Noel B. Gerson, *Franklin: America's "lost state"* (New York: Crowell-Collier Press, 1968). Another valuable reference is Carl Drive, *John Sevier, Pioneer of the Old Southwest* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1923).

Tennessee Records in the North Carolina State Archives

There are very few original records in the North Carolina State Archives which can be identified as specifically related to the area ceded in 1790 and which became Tennessee in 1796. For the most part, these records consist of lists of militia officers, justices of the peace, land grants, land entries, various petitions, correspondence, reports, bills, and acts of the General Assembly. These series are incomplete, and none of them is indexed by name or subject, with the exception of the Secretary of State, Land Office series: "Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records." In 1959, the State Archivist of Tennessee, Mr. Robert T. Quarles, Jr., made a search of the Governor's Papers, Governor's Letter Books, and Legislative Papers, 1778-1789, in the North Carolina State Archives. Microfilm was made of records in these groups which relate to Tennessee, as identified by Mr. Quarles. Copies of this film are available to researchers in the Tennessee State Archives, Nashville, and in the North Carolina State Archives [Microfilm Call Nos.: S.50.2N and S.50.3N; for typescripts of the container lists for the microfilm, see: TCR 2.405.1].

In addition to the above, the North Carolina State Archives has purchased microfilm copies of some other records which are now located in various county courthouses in Tennessee or in the Tennessee State Archives. Both the original and the microfilmed records are listed in the following bibliography. For clarity and brevity in this Information Circular, a short citation is used to reference the material. Please refer to the Bibliographic Legend below to determine the full citation for the material.

Bibliographic Legend

<u>Full Citation</u>	<u>Abbreviated Citation</u>
Governor's Office	GO
Military Collection - Cumberland Battalion (1786-1792)	MC <i>Cumberland</i>
Military Collection - Troop Returns	MC TR
Secretary of State	SS
[Secretary of State papers include a series number and a box number i.e.; SS XVI.1 refers to series XVI and box number 1]	
Treasurer & Comptroller papers, <i>County Settlements with the State</i>	T&C, <i>County</i>
Treasurer & Comptroller papers, <i>Lands, Estates, Boundaries and Surveys</i>	T&C, <i>Lands</i>
Treasurer & Comptroller papers, <i>Military Papers</i>	T&C, <i>Military</i>
Treasurer & Comptroller papers, <i>Oaths, Bonds, and Sureties</i>	T&C, <i>Oaths</i>
[Treasurer & Comptroller papers include a box number, i.e.; T&C, <i>Lands</i> , 9 refers to box number 9]	
Microfilm is referenced by the Microfilm Call Number, i.e.; C.108.30001 or S.50.2N or S.108.350	

Records Relating to More Than One Tennessee County

Field Officers and Magistrates [1788]	[MC TR 7]
Morgan District Continental Troops, 1782	[MC TR 7]
Miscellaneous Collection, <i>Boundary Line Papers</i> , NC – TN, 1789-1971	[MiscColl, <i>Boundary</i> , 3]
Glasgow Land Frauds, Vols. I-IV, Misc. Papers, and Subpoenas, 1798-1800	[SS XII.102-106]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873 (Folders for Tennessee Counties: Claiborne – Wilson)	[SS XII.166]
Reports by Committee on Propositions and Grievances Concerning Land Grants and Warrants, 1783-ca. 1814 (Davidson – Washington counties)	[SS XII.231-233]
Resolutions of the General Assembly Concerning Land Patents in Various Counties and in the Western Country (John Armstrong's Office)	[SS XII.234.1]

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Records Relating to More Than One Tennessee County (continued)

Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1780-1801 (Folders for Davidson – Washington counties, Mero District, Middle District, and Military/Western Lands)	[SS XII.248]
Suspended and Protested Land Grants, 1788-1852, 1903-1925 (Folders for Tennessee Counties: Davidson – Washington, and “No County Listed”)	[SS XII.249]
Land Entries (Western Lands and Armstrong’s Office), 1783-1784, A-Y	[SS XVI.1-8]
Land Entry Book, Western Country, 1783-1792	[SS XVI.9]
Western Land Records (now Tennessee), 1777-1807	[SS XVI.10]
Undelivered Land Records, Western Lands (now Tennessee), 1786-1797	[SS XVI.11]
Western Lands Military District, Misc. Land Records, 1782-1826	[SS XVII.1-3]
Western Lands Military District, Registration of Military Land Warrants for the Continental Line, 1783-1841	[SS XVII.4-8]
Western Lands Military District, Revolutionary Military Papers, 1776-1855	[SS XVII.9-40]
John Steele, Boundary Line Commission, 1792-1814	[SS XX.4-5]
Boundary Between NC, VA, TN, and SC, 1799-1897	[SS XX.6-7]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records: Eastern District, 1779-1802, Middle District, 1783-1797, Western District, 1783-1802, and “No County Given,” 1779-1800 (10 reels) [See Also: individual county listings below]	[S.108.361 – S.108.373, S.108.395]
Name Index to Tennessee Land Records [series listed above] (microfiche created from MARS database)	
General Assembly, Governor, etc., Papers Relating to Tennessee Territory, ca. 1777-1790, (selected records filmed in 1959 from various sources)	[S.50.2N – S.50.3N]
Western Lands, Entries and Warrants, 1784-1793	[T&C, <i>Lands</i> , 9]
Prosecution of Military Land Frauds, 1798-1800 (Folder title)	[T&C, <i>Lands</i> , 9]
Tennessee County Records, Washington County, Tax Records, 1778-1787 [transcripts] (and Misc. and “Reference and Biography” files)	[TCR 2.405.1]

Carter County (Formed in 1797 from Washington County)

Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1801, 1812, 1820	[S.108.350]
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Claiborne County (Formed in 1801 from Grainger and Hawkins counties)

Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
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Davidson County (Formed in 1783 from Washington County)

Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Minutes, 1783-1797	[C.108.30001]
Cumberland District Court, Minutes, 1783-1787 (fragments)	[C.108.30001]
Superior Court, Minutes, 1788-1803	[C.108.30002]
Deeds and Grants, 1784-1793	[C.108.40001 – C.108.40002]
Wills and Inventories, 1784-1805, 1821-1826	[C.108.80001; C.108.90001]
Marriages, 1838-1847	[C.108.90001]
Minute Book A, 1783-1791	[C.108.90001]

(cont. on next page)

Davidson County (Formed in 1783 from Washington County) (continued)

List of Justices of the Peace, 1788, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
List of Militia Officers, 1787, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
Cumberland Battalion, 1786-1792	[MC <i>Cumberland</i>]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1784-1796	[SS XII.248]
Suspended and Protested Land Grants, 1788-1852, 1903-1925	[SS XII.249]
Reports by Committee on Propositions and Grievances Concerning Land Grants and Warrants, 1786-1794	[SS XII.231]
Land Warrants, Surveys, Receipts, Returns, and List, 1786-1792	[SS XVI.10]
Returns of Probates of Wills and Administrations Granted, 1784 (1 folder)	[SS XIX.37]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1783-1824	[S.108.350 – S.108.361]
County Settlements with the State, 1787-1792	[T&C, <i>County</i> , 37]
Final Settlements of Revolutionary War Accounts (4 only):	
Campbell, Charles, 1793-1796; Crooks, John, 1792-1793;	
Joslin, Benjamin, 1792-1796; Rolston, Isaac, 1780	[T&C, <i>Military</i> , 14, 17, 21]
Vouchers for Services Against Chicamauga Indians, 1790, A-Z	[T&C, <i>Military</i> , 71-73]
Clerk's Bonds [1787]-1788	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 26]

Giles County (Formed in 1809 from Maury County)

Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1778-1820	[S.108.373]
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Grainger County (Formed in 1796 from Hawkins and Knox counties)

Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1783-1807	[S.108.373]

Greene County (Formed in 1783 from Washington County)

Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Minutes, 1783-1796	[C.109.30001]
List of Justices of the Peace, 1788, n.d.	[GO 147]
List of Militia Officers, 1786, 1787, n.d.	[GO 147]
Field Officers and Magistrates [1788]	[MC TR 7]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1784-1796	[SS XII.248]
Suspended and Protested Land Grants, 1788-1852, 1903-1925	[SS XII.249]
Reports by Committee on Propositions and Grievances Concerning Land Grants and Warrants, 1783-1804	[SS XII.231]
Land Entries, Warrants, Surveys, Lists, and Receipts, 1783-1794 (Folder title)	[SS XVI.10]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1778-1803	[S.108.367 – S.108.373]
County Settlements with the State, 1783-1790	[T&C, <i>County</i> , 44]
Clerk's Bonds, 1783, 1788	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 28]

Hawkins County (Formed in 1787 from Sullivan County)

Deeds, 1788-1800	[C.110.40001]
Index to Deeds, 1780-1861	[C.110.48351]
Wills, 1797-1886	[C.110.80001]
List of Justices of the Peace, 1788, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
List of Militia Officers, 1788, n.d.	[GO 147]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1787-1799	[SS XII.248]
Suspended and Protested Land Grants, 1788-1852, 1903-1925	[SS XII.249]
Land Surveys, 1787 (2 only) (Folder title)	[SS XVI.10]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1778-1804	[S.108.373 – S.108.378]
Sheriff's Bonds, 1787-1788	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 9]
Clerk's Bonds, 1787	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 28]
Register's Bonds, 1787-1789	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 43]

Jefferson County (Formed in 1792 from Greene and Hawkins Counties)

Index to Deeds, 1792-1846	[C.111.90001]
Marriage License and Bond Book, 1792-1840	[C.111.90001]
Marriage Records, 1840-1870	[C.111.90002]
Land Grants, 1792-1794	[C.111.90002]
Quorum Court, Minutes, 1792-1801	[C.111.90002]
Wills, 1792-1810	[C.111.90002]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1794 (1 only)	[SS XII.248]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1778-1796	[S.108.378]

Knox County (Formed in 1792 from Greene and Hawkins Counties)

Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Minutes, 1799-1800	[C.112.30001]
Superior Court Minutes, 1793-1809	[C.112.30002]
Superior Court Minute Book C, 1798-1803 (microfilm copy very dim)	[C.112.30003]
Circuit Court Minutes, 1799-1851	[C.112.30004]
Record of Guardians, 1792-1821	[C.112.90001]
Wills, 1792-1803, 1826-1830	[C.112.90002]
Marriage Records, 1792-1837	[C.112.90003]
Record Book, 1795-1799	[C.112.90003]
Tombstone Records, Old Gray Cemetery, Knoxville	[C.112.90004]
Pleasant Forest Presbyterian Church, Minutes, 1833-1891	[C.112.90004]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1793-1799	[SS XII.248]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1779-1803	[S.108.378]

Maury County (Formed in 1807 from Williamson County)

Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1778-1815	[S.108.378]
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Montgomery County (Formed in 1796 from Tennessee County)

Marriage Records, 1838-1854	[C.113.60001]
Wills, Inventories, and Guardian Records, 1797-1818	[C.113.60001]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1785-1802	[S.108.378]

Robertson County (Formed in 1796 from Tennessee County)

Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Minutes, 1796-1807	[C.114.30001]
Index to Deeds, 1796-1838	[C.114.48351]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1785-1804	[S.108.378]

Sequatchie County (Formed in 1857 from Hamilton County)

Marriage Records, 1858-1874	[C.114.48351]
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Sevier County (Formed in 1794 from Jefferson County); area also known as "State of Franklin"

Field Officers and Magistrates [1788]	[MC TR 7]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1799	[S.108.378]

Smith County (Formed in 1799 from Sumner County)

Suspended and Protested Land Grants, 1788-1852, 1903-1925	[SS XII.249]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1783-1804	[S.108.378]

Sullivan County (Formed in 1779 from Washington County)

Deeds, 1775-1802	[C.115.40001]
[Abstract of] N. C. [State] Census, 1787	[GO 131]
List of Justices of the Peace, 1788, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
List of Militia Officers, 1788, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
Field Officers and Magistrates [1788]	[MC TR 7]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1780-1799	[SS XII.248]
Suspended and Protested Land Grants, 1788-1852, 1903-1925	[SS XII.249]
Reports by Committee on Propositions and Grievances Concerning Land Grants and Warrants, 1784-1790	[SS XII.233]
Wills, 1781-1783	[SS XIII.38]
Land Warrants, Surveys, Entry Receipts and Payments, 1778-1796 (Folder title)	[SS XVI.10]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1770-1798	[S.108.378 – S.108.382]
County Settlements with the State, 1787-1789	[T&C, <i>County</i> , 831]
Land Caveats, Nos. 1-782	[T&C, <i>Lands</i> , 9]
Counterparts of Revolutionary War Pay Certificates [1782]	[T&C, <i>Military</i> , 35]
Clerk's Bonds, 1787	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 36]
Return of County Officers, 1789	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 55]

Sumner County (Formed in 1787 from Davidson County)

Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Minutes, 1787-1805	[C.116.30001]
Index to County Court Minutes, 1785-1805	[C.116.30002]
Marriages, 1787-1838	[C.116.60001]
Wills, 1793-1822	[C.116.90001]
Shiloh Presbyterian Church, 1793-1847	[C.116.90001]
Bible, Family, and Tombstone Records of Sumner County	[C.116.90002]
List of Justices of the Peace, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
List of Militia Officers, 1787, [1789], n.d.	[GO 147]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1797, 1801	[SS XII.248]
Land Entry Certificates, 1792 (2 only)	[SS XVI.10]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1780-1803	[S.108.382 – S.108.387]
County Settlements with the State, 1787-1789	[T&C, <i>County</i> , 83]
Final Settlements of Revolutionary War Accounts (2 only):	
Houdeshot, Henry, 1795; White, James, 1780-1795	[T&C, <i>Military</i> , 17, 23]
Vouchers for Services Against Chicamauga Indians, 1790, A-Z	[T&C, <i>Military</i> , 71-73]
Return of County Officers, 1789	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 55]
Sheriff's Bonds, 1787	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 18]
Tax Collector's Bonds, 1787	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 52]

Tennessee County (Formed in 1788 from Davidson County)

List of Justices of the Peace, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
List of Militia Officers, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1790 (1 only)	[SS XII.248]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1780-1818	[S.108.387 – S.108.390]
County Settlements with the State, 1789	[T&C, <i>County</i> , 85]

Washington County (Formed in 1777 from Washington District)

Court of Pleas and Quarter Sessions, Minutes, 1779-1806	[C.117.30001]
Superior Court of Law and Equity, Minutes, 1791-1799	[C.117.30002]
Superior Court, Minutes, 1791-1804	[C.117.30003 – C.117.30003.1]
Index to Deeds and Mortgages, 1779-1866	[C.117.48351]
Inventories of Estates, 1779-1804	[C.117.50001]
Settlements of Estates, 1790-1841	[C.117.50002]
Wills, 1779-1858	[C.117.80001]
Tax Lists, 1778-1787 (Published by East Tennessee Historical Society)	[TCR 2.405.1]
List of Justices of the Peace, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
List of Militia Officers, 1786, 1789, n.d.	[GO 147]
Field Officers and Magistrates [1788]	[MC TR 7]

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Washington County (Formed in 1777 from Washington District) (continued)

Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Suspended Land Grants, Western Counties (now Tennessee), 1779-1797	[SS XII.248]
Suspended and Protested Land Grants, 1788-1852, 1903-1925	[SS XII.249]
Reports by Committee on Propositions and Grievances Concerning Land Grants and Warrants, 1779-1801	[SS XII.233]
Land Warrants, Surveys, Entries, Returns, and Lists, 1777-1797, 1803	[SS XVI.10]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1770-1803	[S.108.390 – S.108.395]
County Settlements with the State, 1783-1790	[T&C, <i>County</i> , 89]
Land Caveats, 1782-1784	[T&C, <i>Lands</i> , 9]
Counterparts of Revolutionary War Pay Certificates [1782]	[T&C, <i>Military</i> , 35]
Clerk's Bonds, 1778-1787	[T&C, <i>Oaths</i> , 38]

Williamson County (Formed in 1799 from Davidson County)

Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1800-1801	[S.108.395]
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Wilson County (Formed in 1799 from Sumner County)

Petitions to Alter Patents, 1780-1873	[SS XII.166]
Land Warrants, Plats of Survey, and Related Records, 1783-1802	[S.108.395]